of Andhra Pradesh proposed the formation of an "Economic Union of Southern States" on the lines of the European Union;

(b) if so, the details thereof and Government's reaction thereto; and

(c) the various States which have opted to join the Union and the subject matters likely to be taken up at this common forum?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI I.D. SWAMI): (a) to (c) In its meeting on 21st May 2003 at Hyderabad, the Standing Committee of the Southern Zonal Council under the Chairmanship of the Chief Secretary, Government of Andhra Pradesh felt the need to develop closer corrdination among its member States and it mooted a proposal to constitute the Southern Economic Union to identify specific areas of co-operation to ensure faster growth in trade, commerce industry, tourism and other fields of economic development in the region. There is no proposal under consideration of the Government to set up any economic union for any zone, including the Southern Zone

Damage to Railway Tracks by PWG in Bihar

2450. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that naxal PWG has damaged the rail tracks at a number of places in Bihar in mid July, 2003;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what steps have been taken to prevent recurrence of such incident and to ensure safety of rail passengers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI I.D. SWAMI): (a) and (b) As per available information, MCC (I) is reported to have damaged the Railway properties at a number of places in Bihar and Jharkhand during a call for 'Rail Chakka Jam' from 15th July, 2003.The Railway tracks between the Narkatia Ganj-Balmiki Nagar Section, Samastipur-Darbhanga Section and Muzaffarpur-Sugauli Section and Bargania-Kudwa Chainpur Section have been damaged in the naxalite violence.

(c) The naxalite affected States, DG/CRPF, DG/Railway Protection Force and intelligence Agencies have been sensitized to intensify patrolling, share intelligence and take coordinated measures to prevent or to reduce the intensity of attacks on railway properties by Left Wing extremists.